

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend claims 1 as follows. Please cancel claims 11-14 and 16-22.

1. (currently amended) A pneumatic tire having one or more carcass plies extending between two inextensible beads adapted for mounting on a wheel rim that has a rim flange on each axial side of the tire, and each bead being surrounded by a bead area including a chafer that comprises the portion of the bead area that is in contact with the rim flange, the tire characterized by comprising:

a tread belt package;

a pair of sidewalls extending between the tread belt package and the bead area;

a chafer reinforcement fabric component positioned at a surface of the chafer wherever the chafer contacts the wheel rim flange;

further characterized by:

the chafer and extending axially inward of and around the bead; and

the chafer having a rim flange protector that extends the chafer to follow an axially outward curvature of the rim flange the wheel rim whereby when the tire is mounted on the wheel rim, the chafer reinforcement fabric component extends along the outer surface of the chafer to the axially outermost point of the rim flange protector; and

the chafer, the rim flange protector and the sidewalls being constructed of a single, unitary construction of a single elastomer.

2. (original) A pneumatic tire according to claim 1, further characterized in that:

when the tire is mounted on the wheel rim, the chafer reinforcement fabric component extends along the outer surface of the chafer to the radially and axially outermost point of the rim flange.

3. (original) A pneumatic tire according to claim 1, wherein:

the tire is designed to be operated uninflated, and has a rim flange protector that extends the chafer to follow an axially outward curvature of the rim flange, the tire further characterized in that:

when the tire is mounted on the wheel rim, the chafer reinforcement fabric component extends along the outer surface of the chafer to the axially outermost point of the rim flange protector.

4. (original) A pneumatic tire according to claim 1, wherein:
the bead area includes a toe and a bead base extending axially inward from the chafer and in contact with the wheel rim, the tire further characterized in that:
the chafer reinforcement fabric component additionally reinforces and protects the bead area by extending along the surfaces of the toe and the bead base.

5. (canceled)

6. (original) A pneumatic tire according to claim 1, further characterized in that:
the chafer reinforcement fabric component is comprised of fibers that are woven, having weaving angles in the range of 70 degrees to 110 degrees.

7. (original) A pneumatic tire according to claim 1, further characterized in that:
the chafer reinforcement fabric component in the tire is comprised of fibers that are oriented between approximately 30 degrees and approximately 60 degrees with respect to the radial direction.

8. (original) A pneumatic tire according to claim 1, further characterized in that:
the chafer reinforcement fabric component comprises non-metallic fibers.

9. (original) A pneumatic tire according to claim 1, further characterized in that:
the chafer reinforcement fabric component comprises monofilament fibers.

10. (original) A pneumatic tire according to claim 1, further characterized in that:
the chafer reinforcement fabric component is impregnated with an elastomer adapted for chafing and tear resistance.

11. (canceled)

12. (canceled)

13. (canceled)

14. (canceled)

15. (canceled)

16. (canceled)

17. (canceled)

18. (canceled)

19. (canceled)

20. (canceled)

21. (canceled)

22. (canceled)